

**Wharton Motorized Recreation Plan  
Office of Emergency Management Stakeholder Meeting  
October 22, 2015**

**Ideas/Thoughts/Questions/Concerns raised during meeting**

We should prioritize the state forest roads that need repair.

Bridges and culverts – it is okay for a vehicle (passengers) but not for emergency response vehicle.

Feel strongly that roads that have been open for 50 years should remain open and not close any roads. Roads that may be closed for poor conditions may not be safe for OEM response – they should be repaired.

Critical all names of roads and bridges need to be consistently the same on all maps/IT outlets. This is critical for 911 and all emergency calls.

Roads come and go – but main roads need to have concentrated maintenance – perhaps two levels of repairs can be conducted throughout the forest.

Roads can be good when you start, but one mud hole can make the road impassable.

A road is there, whether it's located in an ecological area, the road still exists. Rare plants sometimes thrive along the roads.

Top Roads that should be maintained annually and consistently:

Washington Turnpike

Tuckerton Road (Iron Pipe)

Godfrey Bridge Road

Hawkins Bridge Road

Maxwell Friendship Road to Route 563

Batsto River Road

Quakerbridge – Washington Turnpike to 206

Penn Swamp Road

Batsto Fire Line Road

Carranza Road to Friendship Speedwell Road

Eagle Road

Hampton Road to Carranza – Route 206

Fleming Road to 206

Batsto fire line – lots of activity and hard to get back there. Quakerbridge – Hampton – High Crossing – they should all be maintained.

You do not want everyone coming into the forest and going everywhere.

Bridges and culverts are expensive to repair – but cannot be forgotten.

Please reconvene the OEM stakeholder group when and if we go to print with a new access plan.

Our forest shouldn't be taken from the good users.

If we get the key roads maintained and get the key roads back to good condition, we can do our job.

Where enduro routes are located in the forest, need to be shared with OEM.

#### **Access issues:**

Other areas that appear to have been roads but made by off-road vehicles should be closed.

Should there be "no go" zones (not real roads) – such as past Dutch Town bogs – impassable.

Most of the roads are what people use but some go back to campsites. The roads need to be prioritized. State Park Service and Forest Fire Service should take the first cut of prioritizing roads. Greenbank and Washington Township OEM are willing to GPS for DEP.

#### **Maintenance:**

Maintaining the key roads on an annual basis is critical.

Seek shared services with NJDOT or municipalities to help maintain the roads

If there's one (1) road among three (3) that get you to the same location, only maintain the one road.

One road off of Jackson, has big waterholes and needs fixing. Off of Atsion Road, needs fixing – Hammonton area – pretty much impassable.

Off of 206 – cranberry bogs – GPS sends people back there – where we do a map, we need to have Google maps include a disclaimer that these roads are not "improved" roads.

Should we put a disclaimer, post them somewhere – reference document – color code the roads like the trails with a "rated" road system.

#### **Law enforcement/laws:**

Coordination between State Park Police and Forest Fire Service. Noticed a void of State Park Police at the stakeholder meeting.

Understaffed, we need more enforcement as there is a lack of it.

OEM wants to be part of the discussion and want to help each other.

Forest Fire Service/State Park Police/civilians – no cross communication and it's a problem.

#### **Education:**

Place signs – "Use roads at own risk."

Public awareness of how far away the people are from civilization needs to be advertised. Signage is key including a brochure on making public aware of the forest.

## **Additional comments received from WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP O.E.M**

### **A. MAPPING of ROADS/ROUTES**

1. Input at the Oct 22nd meeting was given by the Township Mayor, Fire Company, Ambulance Squad and OEM representatives for the development by Parks of a revised MAP proposal for roads and routes to be designated for public 4W vehicular access and to be maintained by Parks for emergency access to recreational routes, trails and areas. The available Parks base map was marked-up with stakeholders recommendations for these designated roads, irrespective of the current condition/maintenance, needs for repairs (hazardous conditions and blockages) and possible questions of jurisdictional responsibility with the Township..

Note: copies of this map when revised by Parks, were requested for review by local stakeholders; and are expected by Parks to be completed in November.

2. An “administrative” mapping is expected for ORV/ATV routes and other Parks roads that are not designated for general public use, including:

- agricultural areas (abandoned/historic areas and active in-holding leases – including the Rutgers Research Center)
- abandoned/closed roadways (e.g., hazardous/un-maintained conditions, bridge/culverts out of service, barrier/gates – including non-recreational in-holdings and private-land boundaries)
- fire/forestry access (including wildfire control lines and non-4W firelines for prescribed burning)
- emergency-service use and DOC Pinelands facility
- designated natural/wilderness areas at Lower Forge, Mullica-Batsto and Oswego, and
- special-use permit/license (organized ORV/ATV/trail-ride events that require Parks permit).

Note: stakeholders recommended that this administrative map be used as a standardized base map for the planning and approvals by Parks for ORV events (e.g., enduros, rides, etc.), that are subject to both Parks special-use permits and Township permitting through the local “parade” ordinance and regulations.

3. Stakeholders recommended the cooperative development of “problem areas” mapping for all designated and non-designated roads to indicate traffic hazards/blockages that are in need of repairs/maintenance, in addition to the approximately ten key access roads that were identified during the meeting for critical access and maintenance (Washington Turnpike, Tuckerton/Ironpipe Roads, Hawkins Bridge Road, Friendship-Speedwell/Carranza Roads, Penn Swamp Road, etc.).

Problem situations include waterholes, washouts, bridge/culvert closures and roadway overgrowth by brush/trees.

4. Roads are to be identified by using the official names of 9-1-1 locatable addressing as adopted by the municipality per State statute.

5. Specific roads/routes that were not indicated on the Parks base map that was available at the meeting, but were recommended by stakeholders to be added as designated roads and were noted on the mark-up map by the stakeholders:

a. Bills Swamp Road, Jenkins between Godfrey Bridge Road and Route 563 MM 32, to be mapped from existing USGS mapping.

b. “Mile Run Road”, Speedwell between Friendship-Speedwell Road and Swamp Road as designated but labeled incorrectly on the base map, is the apparent boundary lane between Wharton SF and the adjacent private ownership/forestry area at Speedwell. The incorrect label should be removed from the base map for the designated road – as it has no assigned 9-1-1 name.

c. Unnamed route (locally referred to as “BAB” along the former east shore of the abandoned West Pond) on the east side (Washington Township) of the Mullica River, Batsto/Pleasant Mills, to be mapped from Mullica River Road/Constable Bridge Road to its southern terminus – based upon photo-imagery of NJ-GeoWeb.

6. Specific routes recommended for removal and not to be designated roads due to their establishment and maintenance as fire/forestry lanes; and were “X”-ed out on the mark-up map at the stakeholders meeting:

a. Forestry woodcut/firelanes (2; east-west) between Tuckerton Road and Devious Mount Road, to the south of Bulldozed Road

b. Bisecting firelanes (east-west) through 3 prescribed-burn units from Devious Mount Road, crossing Hay Road and Mannis Pond Road, and to Lower Forge Road; and between Bulldozed Road and Quaker Bridge-Sandy Ridge Road

c. Forestry woodcut/firelanes (2; north-south) between Washington Turnpike and Ironpipe Road, in the prescribed-burn unit west of Maxwell-Friendship Road.

7. Fox Road not to be designated as a public road within the Mick private-land in-holding and through the State lease to Rutgers Research Center, Lake Oswego Road, Jenkins – as indicated on USGS mapping.

## B. ADMINISTRATION

1. Apparent legal issues for specific roadways/byways/rights-of-way were not addressed at the meeting in regards to apparent jurisdictional questions of responsibilities, acceptance, liability and maintenance that involve both Parks and the Township.

2. Apparent issues of public awareness and information were indicated with respect to the condition, potential hazards and 4WD traffic on the unimproved roadways. Concerns included liability for travel at “own-risk”; and emergency response to actual incidents versus 9-1-1 calls for public/motorist assistance. Concerns also were indicated with respect to the possible mis-representation of non-designated Parks roads/routes as “public” on commercially-available GIS/GPS sources.

3. Parks base map indicates apparently incorrect State/private lands boundaries, which were indicated by stakeholders on the base map:

a. Speedwell area between Friendship-Speedwell Road and Wading River-West Branch near Swamp Road and Mile Run.

b. Tylertown area between Smith Lane and Maple Branch Road, west of Burnt Schoolhouse Road

4. Bridges providing key/emergency access were identified by stakeholders on the base map, as requiring repair/restoration on designated roads:

c. Martha Bridge, Martha Furnace Road (Washington/Bass River Townships) on the Oswego River and BATONA Trail

d. Buck Run Bridge, Old Martha Road (Bass River Township) along Oswego River (Washington/Bass River Townships)

e. Nescochague Creek bridge on West Mills Fireline near Route 542 MM 8/Pleasant Mills Church (Mullica Township) along the Mullica River and designated Parks trails at Batsto